

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 DODE-00 EB-08 NSAE-00
USIA-06 TRSE-00 SOE-02 DOE-15 CIAE-00 COME-00
CAB-02 DOTE-00 INR-10 L-03 MCE-00 /079 W
-----082787 221219Z /23/50

P R 201147Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7541
FAA WASHDC PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 ABU DHABI 752

SECOND C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT--PARA ONE LINE TEN WORD
EIGHT "IT" VICE "IN")

ROME, BRUSSELS, WASHINGTON FOR FAA

E.O. 11652: XGDS - 1
TAGS: EAIR, MOPS, MMOL, EG, SO, TC
SUBJECT: U.S. REGISTERED AIRCRAFT WITH ARMS FOR MOGADISCIO

REF: (A) ABU DHABI 0703, (B) ABU DHABI 0722, (C) SEC
STATE 70428

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1. SUMMARY. AMMUNITION ABOARD DAMAGED US-
REGISTERED DC-8 N8960T CHARTERED TO AIR CARGO
EGYPT HAS BEEN UNLOADED BUT FURTHER DETAILS RE
CARGO CAN BE ONLY SURMISED. AMCIT PILOT INSISTS
HE TOLD ONLY THAT CARGO, WHICH WAS LOADED IN
CAIRO AND BOUND FOR MOGADISCIO VIA ABU DHABI,
CONSISTED OF "MACHINE PARTS." PILOT AFFIRMED

THAT UNUSUAL ROUTING THROUGH PERSIAN GULF DELIBERATE TO AVOID POSSIBLE HOSTILE ACTION TO AIRCRAFT IN NARROW BAB AL-MANDAB AREA. FROM OUR CONTACTS IT WOULD APPEAR THAT AIRCRAFT'S REAL CARGO AND MISSION WELL KNOWN IN ADVANCE BY UAE MILITARY BUT THAT LATTER HAD NOT BRIEFED ABU DHABI CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES. MILITARY HAVE NOW TAKEN CHARGE OF CARGO WHICH APPARENTLY TO BE TRANSHIPPED ABOARD ANOTHER AIRCRAFT. RE POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS OF FAA REGULATIONS, AIRCRAFT CAPTAIN CLAIMS HE FLYING UNDER EGYPTIAN AND UAE, NOT US, FLIGHT RULES AND THEREFORE NOT UNDER FAA JURISDICTION. HOWEVER, HE HAS BEEN UNABLE PRODUCE PROPER AIR WORTHINESS CERTIFICATE FOR AIRCRAFT WHEN REQUESTED TO DO SO. EXPATRIATE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION HAS INDICATED TO US HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO MEET UNOFFICIALLY WITH FAA INSPECTORS BUT CONFIRMED OUR EARLIER THOUGHT THAT UAE MILITARY WOULD PROBABLY BLOCK ANY FAA INVESTIGATION IN ABU DHABI. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED FURTHER SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION REGARDING CARGO AND MISSION OF US-REGISTERED DC-8 N8960T WHICH BROKE DOWN FOLLOWING LANDING AT ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (REFTELS). THIS INFO BASED ON CONVERSATION WITH AIRCRAFT'S AMCIT CAPTAIN DOYLE AND WITH EXPATRIATE DIRECTOR
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OF CIVIL AVIATION (FULLY PROTECT THIS SOURCE). INFORMATION IS OF INTEREST FOR LIGHT WHICH IT SHEDS ON ACTIVE UAE ROLE IN SUPPORT OF EGYPTIAN EFFORTS TO FULFILL ARMS COMMITMENTS TO ARMS COMMITMENTS TO SOMALIA.

3. CARGO. DC-8, WHICH IS AMERICAN OWNED AND MAINTAINED, WAS APPARENTLY CHARTERED BY EGYPTIAN FIRM AIR CARGO EGYPT. CARGO LOADED IN CAIRO WHERE CAPTAIN DOYLE WAS TOLD PRIOR TO TAKEOFF THAT IT CONSISTED OF "MACHINE PARTS", MOSTLY HELICOPTER SPARES, AND "SOME MILITARY MATERIAL." CREW "GUESSED" THAT THIS WAS NOT ENTIRELY ACCURATE DESCRIPTION BUT DOYLE CLAIMS HE DID NOT REALIZE CARGO CONSISTED OF HIGH EXPLOSIVES UNTIL AFTER ARRIVAL IN UAE WHEN HE SO INFORMED BY UNNAMED UAE MILITARY OFFICER. EMBOFF OBSERVED UNLOADING OF CARGO (PARA 2, REF B) WHICH CONSISTED OF PALLETIZED BOXES MEASURING APPROXIMATELY FEET 1.5 BY 2.5 BY 1.5, I.E., SLIGHTLY LONGER THAN STANDARD-SIZE SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION BOXES. ALL BOXES WERE SAME SIZE AND PRESUMABLY ALL CONTAINED SAME OR VERY SIMILAR ITEMS. MARKINGS WERE IN ARABIC

SCRIPT, WHICH EMBOFF UNABLE TO READ, BUT WHICH PRESUMABLY INTELLIGIBLE TO EGYPTIAN LOADMASTER ABOARD AIRCRAFT. OUR GUESS IS THAT BOXES MAY CONTAIN HAND GRENADES. SMALL ANTI-TANK ROCKETS, MORTAR SHELLS, OR THE LIKE. CARGO NOW UNLOADED AND IN CUSTODY OF UAE MILITARY.

4. MISSION. DOYLE CONFIRMED THAT HIS PLANE WAS SCHEDULED TO MAKE TEN BACK-TO-BACK ROUND TRIPS CARIO-ABU DHABI-MOGADISCIO, PRESUMABLY RETURN-ING SAME ROUTE. THIS WAS FIRST MISSION IN THIS SERIES. BETWEEN ABU DHABI AND MOGADISCIO PLANE WAS TO FLY WIDE ARC OVER INDIAN OCEAN FROM POINT AS FAR SOUTH AS LATITUDE OF BOMBAY IN ORDER AVOID OVERFLYING
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ALL BUT THE FRIENDLIEST TERRITORY. PILOT EXPLAINED THAT AIRCRAFT NOT ROUTED VIA JIDDA IN ORDER TO AVOID DANGER OF "BEING SHOT DOWN" IN NARROW INTERNATIONAL AIR SPACE AROUND BAB AL-MANDAB, OR ELSE BEING FORCED

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-----061241 201449Z /50

P R 201147Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7542
FAA WASHDC PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 ABU DHABI 0752
DOWN AS IN RECENT CASE OF EGYPT AIR
AIRCRAFT COMPELLED TO LAND AT NAIROBI BY KENYANS.
ABU DHABI, DOYLE SAID, CONSIDERED BE CONVENIENT AND
POLITICALLY-ACCEPTABLE POINT FOR TECHNICAL LANDING
FOR REFUELING. HE ASSUMED, HE ADDED, THAT UAE
AUTHORITIES WERE EXPECTING HIM AND KNEW TRUE NATURE
OF CARGO.

5. UAE FOREKNOWLEDGE. FROM INFORMATION AVAILABLE
TO US, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT UAE MILITARY WERE
FULLY AWARE OF AIRCRAFT MISSION AND CARGO BUT HAD
NEGLECTED, PROBABLY DELIBERATELY, TO INFORM CIVIL AIR
AUTHORITIES IN ABU DHABI. TELEX TO DIRECTOR OF
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CIVIL AVIATION (DIRCIVAIR) REQUESTING TECHNICAL
STOPS WAS ROUTINELY APPROVED BY DIRCIVAIR DUTY OFFICER
(PALESTINIAN) ON MARCH 14. DIRCIVAIR TOLD EMBOFF
THAT HAD MESSAGE BEEN GIVEN TO HIM, HE PROBABLY WOULD
HAVE ROUTINELY APPROVED LANDINGS FOR REFUELING PUR-
POSES UNLESS HIS ATTENTION HAD BEEN CALLED TO UNUSUAL
ROUTING WHICH HE MIGHT HAVE QUESTIONED BUT PROBABLY
NOT CLOSELY. TELEXED REQUEST FROM CAIRO CLEARLY STATED A
CARGO ON BOARD WAS "MACHINE PARTS" FROM ARAB INDUSTRIAL
ORGANIZATION (EMBOFF HAD OPPORTUNITY BRIEFLY REVIEW
TELEXES). NEVERTHELESS, WHEN DIRCIVAIR ASKED UAE
ARMED FORCES DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF COL MUHAMMAD SAID
AL-BADI NUMBER OF LEADING QUESTIONS ABOUT PROPOSED
DISPOSITION OF CARGO AFTER IT WAS FOUND TO CONTAIN
AMMUNITION, LATTER HAD READY ANSWERS AND APPEARED
TO DIRCIVAIR THAT HE WAS FULLY AWARE OF WHAT WAS
GOING ON. AL-BADI, MOREOVER, INSTRUCTED DIRCIVAIR TO
CONTINUE TO ALLOW FLIGHTS IN THIS SERIES TO MAKE TECH-
NICAL STOPS AT ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND
INDICATED ANOTHER AIRCRAFT WOULD REPLACE N8960T

6. PRESENT SITUATION. CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES
UNCERTAIN WHAT IF ANYTHING TO DO ABOUT SITUATION
IN WHICH SENSITIVE MILITARY EXPLOSIVES ARE BEING
FREIGHTED THROUGH ABU DHABI ON AIRCRAFT WITH
QUESTIONABLE OPERATING PRACTICES AND MAINTENANCE.
DIRCIVAIR INITIAL THOUGHTS ARE TO TRY TO GET
ADJACENT MILITARY AIRPORT TO HANDLE REFUELING AND
OTHER OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF THESE FLIGHTS. THIS

WOULD REMOVE PROBLEM FROM HIS JURISDICTION AND PRE-SUMABLY PROVIDE FOR ENHANCED SAFETY AND SECURITY.

7. FOR FAA: CAPTAIN JAMES DAVIS NAMED IN REF A
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WAS NAME OF PILOT GIVEN ON TELEXED CLEARANCE FROM CAIRO. DOYLE SAYS DAVIS, WHO IS ANOTHER EMPLOYEE OF AIR CARGO EGYPT, WAS PULLED OFF FLIGHT AND DOYLE SUBSTITUTED ONLY AT LAST MINUTE AND FOR UNKNOWN REASON. DOYLE SAYS HE AND PLANE HAVE BEEN ON CONTRACT SINCE SUMMER 1977 (CONTRACTS TERMINATES 1 APRIL 78) AND HAD FLOWN TEXTILES AND SIMILAR CAR-GOES FOR EGYPTIANS TO POINTS IN AFRICA (ENTEBBE WAS MENTIONED). TELEX FROM CAIRO GAVE AIRCRAFT'S CALL SIGN AS CC-183 WHICH IS C/S ALLOCATED TO AERO- COSTA, COLOMBIA-BASED OUTFIT. WHY THIS PARTICULAR C/S WAS CHOSEN REMAINS A MYSTERY TO US AND MAY BE ONE OF POINTS WHICH FAA COULD RAISE WITH PILOT IN PARIS. DOYLE CLAIMS HE WAS FLYING UNDER EGYPTIAN AND UAE FLIGHT RULES, NOT US, AND THEREFORE IS NOT GUILTY OF ANY VIOLATIONS COMING UNDER FAA JURISDICTION. BOTH DOYLE AND FLIGHT ENGINEER RAHRER CLAIM N8960T IS PROPERLY MAINTAINED UNDER FAA REGULATIONS AND HAS VALID A/W CERTIFICATE. HOWEVER, DOYLE UNABLE TO PRODUCE A/W CERTIFICATE WHEN ASKED TO DO SO BY DIRCIVAIR. FURTHER, BOTH MEN ALLEGE THEY WERE MISLED BY EMPLOYER RE DANGEROUS NATURE OF CARGO ABOARD AS THEY CLAIM THEIR CONTRACTS SPECIFICALLY RULED OUT FLYING DANGEROUS CARM INTO WAR ZONES. FURTHER ALLEGE THAT LANDING WAS EXCELLENT, SMOOTH, AND WITHOUT REFERENCE TO EMERGENCY PROCEDURES. MOREOVER, THEY ASSERT AIRCRAFT WAS NOT OVERLOADED AS MAXIMUM T/O WEIGHT OF CARGO ALLOWANCE FOR SUCH FLIGHT WOULD BE ABOUT 82,000 ILS, OR 5,000 LBS MORE THAN THEY WERE ACTUALLY CARRYING (THIS FACT IS UNCHECKABLE AT THIS TIME AS MILITARY HAS CUSTODY OF CARGO AND DIRCIV-AIR DID NOT WISH DELAY ITS REMOVAL FROM CIVIL AIRPORT BY INSISTING UPON IT BEING WEIGHTED). IRONICALLY, DOYLE CLAIMS EGYPTIANS HAD INSISTED FROM BEGINNING THAT CARGO BE FLOWN BY AMERICAN-LICENSED PILOTS IN AMERICAN-MAINTAINED AIRCRAFT FOR SAFETY REASONS.
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C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 3 ABU DHABI 0752

8. EMBASSY CONTINUES BELIEVE THAT DUE TO SENSITIVE
NATURE THIS OPERATION FAA INSPECTORS WOULD PROBABLY
NOT RECEIVE COOPERATION OF UAE MILITARY PERSONNEL
SHOULD THEY ATTEMPT INVESTIGATION HERE. WHEN
EMBOFF AT CAPTAIN DOYLE'S REQUEST ARRANGED WITH
DIRCIVAIR TO HAVE PHOTOGRAPHS MADE OF DAMAGED
LANDING GEAR AND AIRPORT APRON, DIRCIVAIR
PHOTOGRAPHER WAS ARRESTED SECURITY POLICE AS
WERE TWO ADDITIONAL DIRCIVAIR OFFICIALS SENT TO
HIS ASSISTANCE. INTERVENTION BY DIRCIVAIR SUB-
SEQUENTLY SECURED THEIR RELEASE BUT THIS INCIDENT
ILLUSTRATES TOUCHINESS OF LOCAL MILITARY AND SE-
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SECURITY PERSONNEL REGARDING THIS AIRCRAFT AND ITS

MISSION. ON OTHER HAND, DIRCIVAIR HAS INFORMED
EMBOFF THAT HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO COOPERATE UN-
OFFICIALLY WITH FAA INSPECTORS SHOULD THEY ELECT
TO VISIT ABU DHABI BUT INDICATED THAT MEETING WOULD
HAVE TO BE AWAY FROM AIRPORT. HE CONFIRMED OUR
SUSPICION THAT MILITARY WOULD LIKE BLOCK ANY FORMAL
FAA ATTEMPT TO PURSUE INVESTIGATION IN ABU DHABI.
DICKMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIRCRAFT, ARMS, TRANSPORTATION, AMMUNITION, COMBAT OPERATIONS, MILITARY EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE, ARMS SHIPMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Format: TEL
From: ABU DHABI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780349/aaaabplh.tel
Line Count: 340
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: 6c5df2c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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Reference: 78 ABU DHABI 703, 78 ABU DHABI 722
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Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3274739
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S. REGISTERED AIRCRAFT WITH ARMS FOR MOGADISCIO
TAGS: EAIR, MOPS, MMOL, MASS, EG, SO, TC
To: STATE FAA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6c5df2c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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